

14 Vital Skills for Supervisors

Dispensing Discipline




8

Dispensing Discipline



Treat disciplining as a way to educate employees, and elevate their behavior, not as a form of punishment

Effective Discipline Flows from Clear Communication

- Provide clear, written guidelines to employees on your standards and expectations
- Employee handbook should state policy  for responding to improper conduct or poor performance
- Use a fair, consistent approach




Be Flexible

- Allow for flexibility
- Don't confine yourself to following the same course of action in every situation
- You may favor progressive discipline but your policy should permit immediate termination in the most severe cases



⁵ If You're Nervous About Discipline...

Skill
8

- Realize it's the first line that can prove most harrowing
- Once you get over that initial hump, you'll feel more relaxed
- An all-purpose opening  line is, "I'd like to discuss a concern about your behavior/performance"








Beware of These Pitfalls

- Prefacing
- Lecturing
- Blaming
- Personalizing
- Psychoanalyzing 🔊
- Confessing



Behavior Issue and Improving

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- Organize Your Thoughts in Threes:
 - The precise problem
 - Corrective steps
 - Consequences of failing to solve the problem


"I'd like to discuss a concern about your performance"

"To address this concern you must..."

"If this problem continues, the steps are..."

⁸ Discipline Employees Promptly

Skill
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- Waiting only makes matters worse
- The sooner you notify the individual of the violation and the need to improve, the sooner you will see  results – or advance to the next round of discipline



Discipline in Private

- Meet in a soundproof room at a time when others are less likely to interrupt or eavesdrop
- Allow time for the employee to respond to your comments 🗣️
- A performance problem or apparent infraction may stem from a misunderstanding




Keeping Records

- Document every disciplinary meeting or action and put your notes in the employee's personnel file
- Ask employees to review and sign warnings or probationary memos, and give them a copy 📢



Track Improvement


- Agree on a follow-up schedule
- Establishing checkpoints shows the employee that you expect results by a certain time –  and that you will remain vigilant in monitoring progress



Warning

- Never delay documentation – do it in real time
- Show employees what you've written at the end of your meeting and ask them to review and sign your summary notes
- Then place the documentation in the worker's personnel file immediately



- Always document in threes:
 - the existing problem,
 - the corrective action that the employee must take, and 
 - the consequences of non-compliance
- Discipline the same way, every time
- Review how you handled similar problems in the past



It's True

- Treat discipline as an educational and correctional tool, not as a means of punishing or reprimanding people
- By emphasizing that your disciplinary policy is part of a support system to educate everyone, you couch discipline in positive, non-threatening terms

